



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

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New Survey Reveals High Use, Favorite Park Amenities

There is little question that residents of Fairfax County love their parks and visit them regularly! In fact, a new survey reveals that an estimated 79 percent or approximately eight out of ten Fairfax County households used Park Authority facilities in the past year.

The Fairfax County Park Authority's 2007 household survey of park use and satisfaction is the fifth in an annual series of telephone surveys conducted by the Park Authority in partnership with the Center for Social Science Research at George Mason University. Findings from the 2007 survey are based on interviews with a representative sample of randomly selected Fairfax County adults aged 18 and older.

Findings from the study are used in the development of strategic planning initiatives. Specific findings will assist the Park Authority in determining service shortfalls and citizen use patterns as well as customer service needs and outreach targets.

"This survey provides vital pieces of information for the Park Authority Board and staff," said Nick Duray, manager of Market Research and Planning for the Park Authority. "We need to understand our customers in order to focus our efforts in the right direction and to provide facilities, programs and opportunities that interest them."

Study highlights include these findings:

- When asked to rate the quality of life in Fairfax County, nine of ten survey respondents considered the quality of life to be good or excellent, and 80% said parks are extremely or very important to their perceptions of a high quality of life.
- The survey revealed the three most important components of the park system to a high quality of life are natural resource preservation, athletic fields and RECenters.
- The survey reveals some service gaps in park use. Households with incomes under \$50,000 and non-white groups use parks at a below average rate.
- Although non-white households are still underrepresented there has been growth in attracting African-American and Hispanic participants with a 14% increase and 6.5% in household use, respectively.
- Park use by facility shows 61% of households used trails in the past year; 62% used RECenters and 65% used lakefront parks, making these the most popular park facilities used by Fairfax County residents.
- Overall satisfaction with the Park Authority has risen by 5% since 2003, with nearly three quarters (73.9%) of all park users rating the Park Authority highly.

For more information about the 2007 Household Use Survey results or methodology, please contact Nick Duray at 703-324-8560.

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